(c) whether Government would consider deploying local forces to guard the LoC in Kargil area?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) There has been a good response to the rally held at Srinagar for recruitment for the Territorial Army for the 'Home & Hearth' Battalion. The exact number of Kashmiri Pandits cannot be ascertained.

(c) The troops of Ladakh Scouts, a regular infantry regiment of the Indian Army, are already deployed in guarding the Line of Control.

Safety performance of IAF

1687. SHRIMATI S.G. INDIRA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Indian Air Force is seeking international cooperation to improve its safety performance;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is also a fact that the IAF was in a critical situation because of low fleet serviceability; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) The Indian Air Force (IAF) regularly interacts with the Air Forces of other countries for mutual benefit through sharing of information on flight safety and associated matters. This is an ongoing process.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

Smuggling through coastline of India

1688. SHRI RAJEEV SHUKLA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of a recent admission by Indian Navy Cheif in a recent news report that incidents of piracy, terrorism and smuggling of illegal goods are happening through coastline of India, and that such instances are difficult to detect;